



Mayor Michael W. Absher <mayorabsher@cityofmarionil.gov>

Fwd: Sexual Harassment at the Marion Police Department

1 message

Josh Benson <josh@marionccc.com>

Thu, May 2, 2024 at 8:31 AM

To: "Jessica A. Force" <hr@cityofmarionil.gov>, "Mayor Michael W. Absher" <Mayorabsher@cityofmarionil.gov>

Joshua S. Benson
Executive Director
Marion Cultural and Civic Center
Office 618 997 4030
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Life is Art, Live It.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]

Date: Tue, Apr 30, 2024 at 6:08AM

Subject: Sexual Harassment at the Marion Police Department

To: <cmoake@cityofmarionil.gov>, <hr@cityofmarionil.gov>, <mayorabsher@cityofmarionil.gov>

CC: <brent@cityofmarionil.gov>, <chiefbarnett@marionfire.us>, <cityatty@cityofmarionil.gov>, <cityclerk@cityofmarionil.gov>, <director@marioncarnegielibrary.org>, <director@marionilseniorcitizenscenter.com>, <gclarida@cityofmarionil.gov>, <gm@thehubmarion.com>, <inspector@cityofmarionil.gov>, <il@cityofmarionil.gov>, <jolson@cityofmarionil.gov>, <josh@marionccc.com>, <marionac1@marionanimalshelter.com>, <marioncemetery@cityofmarionil.gov>, <safety@cityofmarionil.gov>, <street@cityofmarionil.gov>, <sywillis@cityofmarionil.gov>, <treasurer@cityofmarionil.gov>, <tstotlar@cityofmarionil.gov>, <wastewater@cityofmarionil.gov>, <water@cityofmarionil.gov>, <watermtn@cityofmarionil.gov>

Mayor Absher,

We're tired of the corruption at the police department and it being covered up by the administration. Why are officers like Jesse Thompson still employed?

Did you know that in March 2023 he sexually harassed [REDACTED] in front of witnesses and the administration did nothing? He told [REDACTED] that in the best way to promote was to sleep with [REDACTED] supervisor while tugging on his shirt...I'll give you one guess as to who [REDACTED] supervisor was. [REDACTED] reported it immediately to Chief Fitts, who did NOTHING. He allowed a young [REDACTED] officer to be harassed in the workplace, in front of witnesses, but did nothing. Yet, when [REDACTED] harassed a [REDACTED] officer later that year [REDACTED] was immediately investigated. Why is Jesse Thompson being protected?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

After having an affair ON DUTY he lost taxpayer dollars because many cases to be thrown out of court because of his relationship with his now wife. The cameras at the courthouse caught them in [REDACTED] office for hours during the work day. One guess as to what they were doing. This is the second affair he had on the city's dime. The first time it was in the Disclosure newspaper that he was having sex on duty in our parks. How many times are the taxpayers going to pay for him to have sex at work?

Speaking of court cases, I can't even understand why he wasn't fired after his illegal actions resulted in the City almost being held in contempt of court in the Jeffrey Watkins 21MR339 case on 3/29/23. How much did that case cost the taxpayers in overtime just for it to get dismissed?

How much has he cost the taxpayers by using his work hours not to work but to harass [REDACTED]? And getting other officers involved in the harassment too? What did the Chief and the Lt. do then even though they were told about it? Nothing.

What about the time he spends driving his step kids all the way to Cartersville for school in his squad car every day? Or hauling his boat that he rents out to the lake behind his squad?

There's an officer currently off work on unpaid leave for punishment for much less than anything Thompson has ever done. But guess who reported that officer and got him in trouble? Thompson. He thinks he's untouchable, and so far he's been proven right.

Maybe you should start asking why Chief Fitts and Lt. Dwyer are so invested in protecting Thompson. What does he have on them? Maybe it's time to open your eyes and realize they are birds of the same dirty feather. [REDACTED]

If you can't do something about this mess then maybe the news can. But someone needs to do something because this is sickening.



MICHAEL W. ABSHER, MAYOR

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JOHN M. BARWICK, JR.

Public Health & Safety

June 10, 2024

Board of Fire and Police Commissioners
Of the City of Marion
350 Tower Square Plaza
Marion, IL 62959

RE: Recommendation for Charges and Dismissal - Sgt. Jessie Thompson

Commissioners:

It is my duty to report to you that, based upon information I have obtained regarding an incident that occurred during the early morning hours of March 17, 2023, I hereby recommend that you, as a Board, file a formal charge for Official Misconduct for actions unbecoming a police officer against Sgt. Jessie Thompson for his actions on March 17, 2023, in which he promulgated a conversation regarding an inappropriate sexual matter/nature within the workplace. Said conversation was openly conducted in the presence of multiple officers (both male and female) of the MPD as well as an outside agency. Said action is in violation of state and federal laws, as well as the parties' Collective Bargaining Agreement, the City of Marion handbook, and police department policies and procedures.

The charge is:

I. OFFICIAL MISCONDUCT in that on or about March 17, 2023, Sgt. Thompson is believed to have engaged in and participated in group setting conversations around subordinate officers (both male and female), while on duty in a supervisory capacity, of a sexual nature that was offensive, potentially harassing in nature, and unbecoming of a police officer or supervisor.

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The above actions of Sgt. Thompson are in violation of this department's Policy and Procedures regarding Personnel Conduct, City of Marion Handbook employee policies as well as a potential violation of State Law civil rights, 775 ILCS 5/2-102.

The City is seeking the termination of Sgt. Thompson and per Article 9 of the CBA, this matter is required to be heard by the Merit Board. Pursuant to your rules, you have the ability to suspend Sgt. Thompson for up to 30 days while a hearing on this matter is scheduled. I ask that you schedule a hearing on this matter in accordance with your rules and regulations.

Sincerely,



Michael W. Absher, Mayor

DISCIPLINARY AGREEMENT

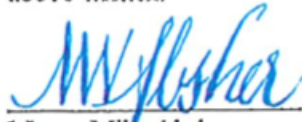
This Disciplinary Agreement ("Agreement") is being entered into by Officer Jessie Thompson "Thompson", the Fraternal Order of Police Union ("Union") and the City of Marion ("City") for the purpose of resolving an incident that took place involving Officer Thompson.

The undersigned parties agree and acknowledge the following:

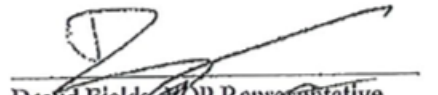
On or about March 17, 2023, you violated one or more City policies and were afforded your contractual rights regarding the disciplinary process outlined in the CBA.

1. In light of the circumstances surrounding the incident and timeline of the incident being discovered the parties desire to reach an agreed to resolution rather than conducting a full hearing in front of the City of Marion Police and Fire Merit Board.
2. The parties hereby agree to the following discipline:
 - a. Six (6) day suspension (three (3) days without pay, three (3) days paper);
 - b. Officer Thompson to complete "sexual harassment training within thirty (30) days of this agreement.
3. This Agreement is without prejudice or precedential value and shall not be referred to in any other grievance or arbitration cases or matters involving similar conduct. The City does not waive its right to administer greater disciplinary action for infractions similar to those committed in this case.
4. By signing this agreement Officer Thompson further acknowledges that he has had an opportunity to ask his Union representative questions about the Agreement, enters it voluntarily and that he considers the Agreement to be in his best interest in exchange for proceeding forward with the merit board process.

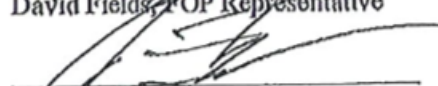
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this Agreement as of the date first above written.



Mayor Mike Absher
On behalf of the City



David Fields, FOP Representative



Officer Jessie Thompson, Employee